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OUR COUNTRY'S BOAST.

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MISCELLANY.

For the HERALD *of* FREEDOM.

Messrs. PRINTERS,

As you are commencing a new periodical publication, which your propofals have aſſured the publick ſhall be FREE *and* IMPARTIAL, *the following obſervations may perhaps be in point—if you think ſo, they are at your ſervice.*

On the Freedom of the PRESS.

A *FREE* Preſs has been juſtly conſidered as the palladium of liberty, the ſcourge of tyrants, the terrour of ſycophants, the detector and dread of mock patriots and unprincipled demagogues—it is alſo the developer of publick and private machinations againſt the peace of ſociety, the ſchemes of ambition, avarice and peculation—it is a moſt powerful engine to counteract the plans of policy which may be laid by ariſtocratick juntos, for their own aggrandizement, and the depreſſion of the people—as alſo to detect and expoſe the injuſtice of the majority of an overbearing and arbitrary democracy. In ſhort, its bleſſed effects on *publick men* and *publick meaſures* are ſuch, that the degrees of freedom and ſafety which any community enjoy, may generally be calculated by the liberality and free ſtate of the preſs in ſuch community.——How highly then to be valued, and how ſacredly to be preſerved is this ſublime privilege. The citizens of America are juſtly tenacious of this darling birthright. They are nurtured in the ennobling idea, that to *think* what they pleaſe, and to *ſpeak*, *write* and *publiſh* their ſentiments with decency and independency on every ſubject, conſtitute the dignified character of Americans. Having derived the moſt permanent advantages from this ſource, *light* and *knowledge* upon the great ſubjects of liberty, laws and government, and having been inſpired by ſentiments of ardour and heroiſm, originating from the ſame cauſe, to eſtabliſh an independent empire, and adopt a glorious federal conſtitution, they are enthuſiaſtick to preſerve this ineſtimable jewel. Our children, alſo, the riſing generation, from the copious ſtreams which continually iſſue from this fountain, are early initiated in the ſame independent principles, and by this medium we may anticipate the tranſmiſſion of political knowledge, virtue and patriotiſm through a long lapſe of years, producing a race of freemen, heroes and ſtateſmen, till time, the invincible leveller of empires and ſtates, ſhall ſtop the revolutions of nature.

But, Meſſrs. Printers, the *uſe* and *importance* of a free preſs are not confined to ſubjects of political diſcuſſion; there are a variety of matters and things in ſociety, of a more local and confined nature, which are properly cognizable by a free and impartial preſs. It is proved by daily experience, that the wit and ſubtilty of man, in the commiſſion of daring violations of the laws of equity, juſtice and benevolence, are ſuperiour to the force of all divine and human inſtitutions. Inſtances of ſhameleſs avarice and oppreſſion, notorious falſhood, breaches of faith, to the ruin of the unwary, matrimonial infidelity, ſeduction and proſtitution, drunkenneſs, gaming, idleneſs and the like, which through the addreſs of the perpetrators elude the laws, are proper objects of ſatirical caſtigation; and many an abandoned wretch, who, callous'd o'er with crimes, has been known to ſhrink from the laſhes of a free preſs. Indeed it is difficult to ſay what is not proper to undergo the ordeal of criticiſm and animadverſion. Free and liberal enquiries upon points of morality, ſcience and philoſophy, government, laws and finance, trade, manufactures, agriculture and commerce, claim a very diſtinguiſhed attention from the Editors of a publick Paper. Speculations which expoſe groſs errours and abſurdities on either of theſe ſubjects, ſhould meet with an encouraging and candid reception from the publick.

It muſt be granted after all, that the liberty of the preſs, like other bleſſings of a propitious Providence, is liable to abuſe; but perhaps a greater difficulty cannot occur in juriſprudence, than that of drawing a juſt and accurate line of limitation to its exuberances. Its exceſſes, therefore, ought to be conſidered by all wiſe and patriotick magiſtrates as a judicious parent would conſider the overflowings of a too generous diſpoſition in a child. They ſhould attempt to give a ſalutary direction to thoſe ſtreams that appear to take a devious or vicious courſe, and not attack the fountain, leſt they deſtroy the ſource of numberleſs bleſſings to ſociety.

It muſt afford pleaſure to every well wiſher to the beſt intereſts of our country to obſerve new channels of knowledge opening to the people. Publick Papers, eſtabliſhed upon independent and impartial principles, merit the patronage of all; and as yours is profeſſedly began upon a liberal plan, it cannot be doubted that you will meet with encouragement ſo long as your exertions correſpond with your profeſſions.

PHILALETHES.

For the HERALD *of* FREEDOM.

NOTICES of the PARLIAMENT of PARIS.

A GREAT deal has lately been inſerted in our papers concerning the preſent unhappy diſputes between His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty and the Parliament of Paris. A ſimilar diſpute happened in the year 1732, when the Parliament remonſtrated againſt regiſtering the Bull *Unigentius*, the King anſwered he ſaw nothing in their remonſtrance to induce him to make any alteration in the arret of his council. This produced another complaint; but the King declared *he would be obeyed*. The one continued to make *declarations*, and the other continued to *remonſtrate*. Some of the Parliament were impriſoned.—All the members of the *Enquetes* and *Requetes* of the *Palais* received *lettres de cachet*, ordering them into baniſhment without exception. The final accommodation of this affair was made up at *Fountainbleau* in an extraordinary council held for that purpoſe. Letters of repeal were diſpatched to the exiled members—the opening of the Parliament fixed and confirmed in all its rights and privileges.——In a nation where the ſpirit of liberty yet animates the people, it is to be wiſhed all unhappy differences may be as ſpeedily ſettled.

The Parliament of Paris is divided into 8 chambers: The Grand Chamber, compoſed of the firſt Preſident, 7 other Preſidents, and 29 Counſellors; 5 Chambers of *Enquete* and *Requete*, or enquiry and petition, compoſed of 2 Preſidents and 28 Counſellors; 2 Chambers of the *Tournelle*—the *Tournelle Criminelle*, and the *Tournelle Civile*. Theſe are called *ſovereign courts*, becauſe there lies no appeal from them in any cauſes brought before them. But what gives them the greateſt authority is, that every *edict*, *ordinance* or *declaration* of the King and Council muſt be regiſtered (or *verified*, as the term is) by them, before it can have the force of a law; ſo that they can have a negative upon it. The exerciſe of this privilege, which the Parliament do not think fit to relinquiſh, has cauſed the late ſtruggles.

There are in France 9 Parliaments beſides that of Paris, viz. of *Thoulouſe*, *Bourdeaux*, *Aix*, *Grenoble*, *Dijon*, *Rouen*, *Rennes*, *Pau*, and *Metz*; but their powers and privileges are not equal to thoſe of *Paris*.—— It is extremely painful to make any obſervations on the conduct of our great Ally. Without doubt the ambition of the Monarch would not heſitate to deprive the Parliament of this darling privilege, ſo as to have no bar in his way to the regiſtering his edicts. On the other hand, it perhaps will not be far from the truth to obſerve, that moſt of the remaining liberties of France is reſerved in the Parliament of Paris; ſo that a ſurrender of this privilege would annihilate a great proportion of that which they are enabled to boaſt.

The preſent ſtruggle we may pronounce as characteriſtick of this aſſembly; for beſides the firſt-mentioned circumſtances, they have uniformly reſiſted the encroachments of Sovereignty. About 1719 and 20 they refuſed to regiſter any acts relating to *Lawes's* Miſſiſippi bubble, or *paper money ſcheme*; nor could baniſhment terrify them to give a ſanction to the frauds and tricks of knaviſh ſtock-jobbers.

Some Engliſh writers pretend to make contemptible alluſions to the Parliament of Paris—It is diſputed whether they can find ſo much virtue and patriotiſm *nearer home*. It is true they are not elected by the people, but the greater is their honour if they act for the people's good.

It is a diſadvantage both to an American and to our good allies the French in general, that we ſhould be forced to draw a great part of our information from the Engliſh partial repreſentation of things, from which cauſe many prejudices have imperceptibly ſtolen in among us.—Hence appears the neceſſity of cultivating the French tongue in this country.

The Engliſh delight to deſcribe the French nation as a country where liberty itſelf, nay the very *name* has been long loſt. What does their own country exhibit in the mean time? They very *loudly boaſt of the name*, but the ſenſe and ſpirit are not to be found. Mr. Lawes, who was backed with the favour of the Duke of Orleans, then *Regent* of France, could not make himſelf formidable to this Parliament. Being aſked why he did not bribe them, he anſwered he had it in his head, but frankly owned he did not know where to begin. If it be aſked, why an aſſembly ſo free from corruption ſhould not be able to recover their ancient privileges, and reſtore liberty to their country, ſince they have the good will of the people with them in all their proceedings; one reaſon that may be given is the terror of a great ſtanding army continually frowning on them.

What Mont. Mizeray ſaid to an Engliſhman at the cloſe of the laſt century ought to be had in remembrance of every nation as well as England. "We had once in France," ſaid he "the ſame happineſs and privileges with you: Our money was not taken from us, but by our own conſent: Our Kings were ſubject to the rules of *law* and *reaſon*; yet now, alas! we are miſerable, and all is loſt. Think nothing, Sir, too dear to maintain theſe precious advantages; and if ever there be occaſion, venture your life and eſtate and all you have, rather than ſubmit to the conditions you ſee us reduced to."

COSMOPOLITE.

Boſton, September, 1788.

I HAVE often ſmiled when I have read that line in Hudibras, which ſays,

"*Fools are known by looking wiſe.*"

However paradoxical this ſentence may appear, it is certainly founded in truth; and I doubt not every man of obſervation muſt frequently have made the remark, for you cannot go into a general company without ſeeing one or two very fooliſh wiſe-looking fellows. They expreſs their approbation, or diſapprobation of what is ſaid with a ſhrug, a nod, or a wink—as much as to ſay I am in the ſecret—but mum, I muſt not divulge it. Another ſet of wiſeacres, of about the ſame claſs, have a collection of phraſes, which they apply indiſcriminately to any ſubject that occurs. "I am up to it." "Let me alone for that." "Don't you believe it." "That is the ſort." "It's monſtrous clever." I am acquainted with ſeveral reputed ſagacious men, who can furniſh an evening's converſation, from about half a dozen ſuch phraſes, properly or improperly introduced.

I ſhall illuſtrate what I have ſaid with the portrait of a certain lounger, well known in the environs of ———. —— is a man who has an income which enables him to make a decent appearance. As he was bred to no buſineſs, and never was fond of reading, his ideas are very confined. In the morning he breakfaſts at the ———, and reads the deaths, caſualties, and fires in the papers, which furniſh him, he thinks, with a ſufficient paſſport into all the companies he meets with during the courſe of the day. He takes a whet at the tavern about noon, which, if he receives no invitation to dinner in private, ſerves the place of a regular meal. He repairs again to the coffee-houſe, *after dinner*; picks his teeth with an